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ABSTRACT

State departments of education (SDEs) play a pivotal role in the implementation of state-level school reform. This role is examined using two models of statewide school reform in Kentucky and Vermont. How the departments implemented their plans and how such implementation affected the internal dynamics of the departments, as well as the external ability of schools and districts to implement reform is described. The book focuses on systemic reform, bureaucracies, and innovative organizations and how SDEs effected changes in this mix. It looks at how expected changes compare to what is actually occurring. Also examined are the ways in which SDEs' actions seem to be influencing local implementation of complex reform. The two case studies are then cross-analyzed, and conclusions as to what are the broad lessons offered by these two states' effort are reported. The book explains complex reform actions and how these came to be on the education reform agenda. It also provides a critique of the claims of systemic reformers, along with a description of the education system SDEs are trying to change. (Contains an index and around 150 references.) (RJM)

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